

# ITEM 7-B

## HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA REPORT

**DATE:** October 4, 2012

**TO:** HONORABLE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE  
HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD

**FROM:** Dina Tasini, Project Planner  
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**APPLICATION:** **Certificate of Approval — Historic Streetlights – City of Alameda.** The applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to remove and replace approximately 700 “16-Flute” historic streetlights citywide.

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### **BACKGROUND**

The project consists of a proposal to replace approximately 700 historic streetlights that display a 16 flute designed pole at various locations throughout the City.

On November 18, 1987, the City Council approved the designation of 1,297 historic streetlights located throughout the City of Alameda. These streetlights range in age from one hundred years to fifty-four years of age. They represent a historical era in the City in which the city was known as one the best illuminated cities on the west coast. Of the 1,297 designated lights, approximately 700 include 16 flute designed pole.

In 2004, the Public Utilities Board approved the transfer of the City’s streetlight program from the Public Works Department to Alameda Municipal Power (AMP). In 2005, staff completed an inspection of streetlights and found many were in a state of deterioration. A phased approach to replace streetlights was selected by AMP and in fiscal year 2006; staff replaced nineteen of the historical streetlights that required immediate attention in the first phase of the program.

In October of 2007, AMP prepared to start Phase II of the replacement program. However, in the interim two years, AMP staff had been alerted to the issue that these streetlights are designated City Historic Monuments and any repair or replacement would need to be considered by the Historic Advisory Board (HAB). At a June 2008 meeting, members of the board asked staff to address five concerns before returning back to a public hearing so they could make an informed decision on the Alteration Permit.

On March 1, 2012, a public hearing was held and the board requested that staff return with additional information regarding the costs associated with replacement versus repair of the streetlights.

## **ANALYSIS**

The streetlight replacement project will be completed in a phased manner. In response to the Board's request, AMP has provided the following table of options for Board consideration.

**Table 1: Replacement and/or Repair of 16 Flute Deteriorated Historic Streetlights**

Option	Description	Total Cost	Warranty	Life Expectancy	Total Cost of Ownership at 40 years*
			(Yrs)		
A	Repair Streetlight	\$2,910	10	20	\$6,620
B	New Steel Pole - Galvanize	\$2,810	1	40	\$3,860
C	Fiberglass (Pole, Arm & Shroud)	\$3,750	3	40	\$4,400

\* Total Cost of ownership includes cost for re-painting every 10 years and inspection every five years. For Option A, there are anticipated repair costs after 20 years.

After analysis and consideration of the necessity to preserve the historic character of the streetlights, fabrication of new galvanized steel poles to match the existing poles proved to be the most appropriate option. Staff also analyzed the possibility of repair of the existing streetlights and found that repair of the streetlights is a short-term solution and requires replacement and maintenance more frequently to keep the streetlights in good condition. Over a 40 year life span, the repair option is the most costly option and will have a significant impact on the existing maintenance and streetlight replacement program for Alameda Municipal Power. The fiberglass alternative provides a long-term solution with respect to maintenance and repair but will not provide a streetlight that is in keeping with the historic character of the existing lights both in appearance and material. Therefore, Option B, fabrication of new galvanized poles to match the historic poles and reuse of the arms and shrouds is the best alternative. Option B is recommended because this option preserves the character of historic streetlights and can be completed within AMP's budget for the program. Attachment 2 includes an illustration of the proposed streetlights to be installed pursuant to recommended Option B.

## **FINDINGS**

Pursuant to Alameda Municipal Code 13-21.5 the HAB shall determine whether to issue a Certificate of Approval for alterations of a Historical Monument, with or without conditions of approval, based on whether plans and specifications meet the standards established by the HAB and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

"Rehabilitation" is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while

preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values." (NPS.gov)

The Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows.

1. **A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.**

This project consists of the replacement of historic streetlights with new streetlights. No new use is proposed.

2. **The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.**

The overall height, the shrouds and the detailing of the arms are being maintained in this project. In addition, the proportions or spatial relationships of these elements are being preserved as well.

3. **Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.**

No conjectural features or architectural elements from other historic properties are proposed for this project.

4. **Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.**

There are no alterations to the historic streetlights that have acquired historic significance over time.

5. **Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.**

Fabrication of the steel poles ensures the flutes, color, and the proportions of the light poles are being preserved. The shrouds and arms are being preserved to the extent possible, while ensuring that they are safely constructed.

6. **Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.**

Unfortunately, repair of the historic streetlights is not fiscally possible as it presents a long-term funding obligation and under the current and projected funding constraints of the city. However, a significant effort has been made to have the proposed streetlights match their historic predecessors in terms of design, material and texture.

7. **Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.**

No chemical or physical treatments are proposed for this project.

8. **Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.**

Minimal ground excavation is proposed as a part of this project. If any archeological resources are discovered, all required state and local mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. **New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.**

No additions for habitable space are proposed for this project.

10. **New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.**

No adjacent new construction shall be undertaken as part of this project.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This proposed project is Categorically Exempt from additional environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15301(l)(1) – Existing Facilities and 15331 - Historical Resource Rehabilitation.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

This agenda item was advertised in the Alameda Journal on September 14, 2012. Staff has not received any public comments on this project.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Historical Advisory Board approves a Certificate of Approval for the replacement of approximately 700 Pendant and Post-Top Historic Streetlights that display a “16 Flute” design pole consistent with attachment 2.
2. Find that this project is compliant with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and that the project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA under Section 15331 – Historical Resource Rehabilitation; and

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

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DINA TASINI  
PROJECT PLANNER

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Replacement Pole Design